

BOOK REVIEW

Medicharla, P. (2021). *The Conscientious Manager*. SAGE Publications

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Conscientiousness, according to the literature, is often tied to employee performance and workplace autonomy (Simmering, Colquitt, Noe, & Porter, 2003). Little research exists on understanding conscientiousness as an inward reflective exercise. The book bridges this gap by helping managers understand its role on the individual manager and the organization. Empirical research by Lin, Lin, Ma, Wang and Wang (2015) suggests that conscientiousness is the reason why individuals intentionally allocate personal resources such as time, physical, mental, and emotional energies, or financial resources when it pertains to work performance. Additionally, conscientiousness assists individuals resist the negative effects of stress. More practically, conscientiousness can both promote and exacerbate stressors in work performance. Thus, knowing how to individually manage an individual's conscientiousness to promote individual and organizational success is a positive outcome for any reader.

Given the degree of field study into the role of conscientiousness, further reflection by individual managers into their own understanding can be beneficial in the current work climate. The Preface helps the reader understand how the book applies to the managerial landscape and guides the reader to reflect internally regarding their daily lives as a manager and calculate where they fall on the spectrum of being truly conscientious. The strength of an individual leader can be better understood and applied by further study.

In The Conscientious Manager, the author, Phani Medicharla, provides examples of different scenarios in the workplace requiring some intentional thought and reflection into decisions being routinely made. The book is written for the average manager or students with management aspirations or goals, specifically those who study business administration. Companies with leadership development programs could benefit from sharing the core themes discussed with individuals groomed for growth positions. The themes of this book centre around

creating a culture of workplace ethics which encourage managers and their employees to establish a positive work environment where proficiency and productivity can thrive. The book is nicely broken down into sections providing context, thoughtful consideration, action items, and self-reflection into one's own personal style of management.

Overall, the book thoroughly covers quite a few topics regarding workplace ethics. The anecdotal stories provided by the author strengthen the context to further understand the more abstract discussions that follow. Without the stories, I would struggle to resonate with what Medicharla is writing. I particularly enjoyed the story of the village son who struggled to find his place among his community. A heartwarming story focused on the grit and perseverance required by an individual to understand the needs of others and how to support the community they are a part of. Each chapter is carefully laid out to understand the meaning behind workplace ethics.

Chapter 1 explores **how a manager understands their own managerial role** when working directly with their teams. Managers must understand the specifics of what they are asking of each employee to be effective. Providing a conceptual diagram helps the reader better understand how each person's work impacts their organization.

In Chapter 4, the author discusses the need to understand **how an employee fits into the organization**. This section provides key considerations for managers who want to create teams that play on each member's strengths and help each member understand the role they play in the team.

Chapter 12 gives the reader a chance to understand **how to create a safe environment** where individuals in a team can express thoughts without fear of judgment or ridicule. Creating a safe environment should be a high priority and this section provides the reader with the opportunity to create an area for creativity and innovation to drive the business forward.

Chapter 17 discusses **commitment to the team** and the work a manager must do to ensure their team is thriving. Managers should look at this section specifically to understand how to create a culture that creates opportunities to "dive" in with each member of the team and

create an optimal learning environment. Additionally, the team should understand all team roles and the place of each role in successful outcomes.

Chapter 23 is perhaps the most critical chapter of the book. Medicharla's discussion on **understanding power within an organization** identifies how a manager can truly be (or not be) conscientious when working with their team. His analysis of leadership when understanding identity and a manager's reputation lays the foundation of a manager's potential to be effective.

When I think about workplace ethics from the standpoint of a manager, I think the author needs to touch on two scenarios not discussed in the book – ethical practices when witnessing unethical behavior and building a culture founded on ethics. These are two scenarios occurring in a variety of settings in unrelated industries. For example, we witness unethical behavior more frequently. Managers may witness it even more. My question for the author is “What would the conscientious manager do in a situation like this? How would this be a moment for growth for the manager?” Also, when looking at a team, how does a conscientious manager look at their team and work to cultivate a team that practises appropriate ethical behavior? These two areas would strengthen the book from a more practical standpoint. Phani Medicharla's book is engaging, thought-provoking, and speaks to the reader on a deep personal level. The book provides practical advice and serves as a great resource for managers looking to build upon their skills and create a more nurturing and ethical workplace.

REFERENCES

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